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SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM TO REVIEW VALVE FAILURE AT QUAD CITIES PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a special inspection team to the Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station to review the circumstances surrounding a valve failure that led to the shutdown of the Unit 2 reactor Wednesday afternoon.

The plant, located at Cordova, Illinois, is operated by Exelon Generation Company. Quad Cities Unit 1 remains in operation.

A pressure relief valve, which is part of the reactor cooling system, opened unexpectedly and failed to close, transferring steam from the reactor to a water-filled tank called a pressure suppression pool. The steam condensed to water and remained in the tank.

When plant operators were unable to close the valve, they shut the Unit 2 reactor down. There were no releases of radioactivity associated with the incident.

The pressure relief valve is designed to allow reactor operators to reduce pressure in the reactor cooling system if needed to respond to unexpected conditions or problems.

Exelon declared an "alert" under its emergency plan and notified appropriate local, state, and federal agencies. An alert is the second lowest of four emergency levels.

NRC inspectors at the plant monitored the utility's response to the valve problem, and the agency staffed the Incident Response Center in the Region III Office in Lisle, Illinois.

The alert classification was terminated at 10:51 p.m. (CDT) Wednesday after the reactor was placed in cold shutdown with the cooling system below the boiling point. The utility is continuing to investigate the cause of the valve failure and formulate repair plans.

The special inspection team will issue a report about 45 days after the completion of the inspection. The report will be available from the NRC Region III Office of Public Affairs and online in the NRC's electronic reading room at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>

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